

generally unprofitable because of the strong breeze. Thankfully, the wind had dropped by evening but under clearing skies, the temperature fell to below the seasonal norm for the night's moth trapping. Three light traps were operated in the central part of the reserve.

Notwithstanding the far from ideal weather conditions, a healthy total of 105 species of Lepidoptera were recorded, either as adults or larvae, over the meeting as a whole and some 24 of these—mostly microlepidoptera—were new to the Reserve. Although largely unexceptional, they included the following locally scarce species: *Evergestis pallidata* (Hufn.), blue-bordered carpet *Plemyria rubiganata rubiginata* (D.&S.), haworth's pug *Eupithecia haworthiata* Doubl. and dingy footman *Eilema griseola* (Hb.). *Phllonorycter heegeriella* (Zell.), *Blastobasis decolorella* (Woll.), large twin-spot carpet *Xanthorhoe quadrifasiata* (Cl.), purple thorn *Selenia tetralunaria* (Hufn.) and silky wainscot *Chilodes maritimus* (Tausch.) were perhaps the more noteworthy of the remainder.

New Forest, Hampshire, 10 October 1998

Leader: **Tony Pickles**.—This field meeting was held to follow up last year's meeting which attempted to establish the range of *Agrochola haematidea* (Dup.), the southern chestnut, in the New Forest. Because this noctuid moth flies for a limited period, around dusk only, the meeting was convened for 17.00 hours and members were allocated sites which seemed likely to support the moth in the east of the Forest. In 1997 *haematidea* had been found to be present over the west of the Forest more or less wherever suitable conditions prevailed. The moth seemed to favour tall mature bell heather *Erica cinerea* L. growing in drier areas.

The weather was much better than in the previous year and nine members and friends met at Lyndhurst where a most persistent New Forest donkey tried to join the group. The bipeds later split into three parties, but only the members trapping on the higher ground just before Matley Passage were successful. One female *haematidea* came to their lights before 19.30 hours thus confirming its presence in the East of the Forest. Three unidentified, medium sized noctuids which could also have been of this species were observed making short low flights over the heather just before the onset of darkness at between 19.10 and 19.25.

Little can be deduced from one month, but it is notable that there is still no occasion on which the moth has been seen in numbers in the New Forest, although this seems to be frequently the case in Sussex. The bell heather in the east is predominantly not tall and mature, but is mostly present on edges of larger tracts of *Calluna* and as no more than ten per cent of the whole. It would seem encouraging that the moth can survive in areas that do not comply very closely with its preferred habitat. I would like to thank those members who attended the meeting and the Forestry Commission for their assistance.

Homefield Wood, Medmenham, Buckinghamshire, 11 October 1998

Leader: **Ian Sims**.—Despite a rainy start to the day, by the time of the meeting the weather had cleared and the day was sunny, warm and calm: ideal conditions for searching for leaf-mining Microlepidoptera, the main quarry for this meeting so late in the season. Unfortunately, perhaps due to the inclement weather earlier in the day, no one apart from the leader attended this meeting. Not perturbed, I spent an hour or two recording before returning home. Homefield Wood is a nature reserve on the Chilterns managed by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists

Trust (BBONT). It consists of a large complex of woods, mostly pine and beech, with forest rides and areas of chalk downland.

The first thing I encountered, while waiting to see if anyone was going to show up, was a full-grown larva of *Abraxas sylvata* (Scop.) (clouded magpie) descending on a silken thread from wych elms (*Ulmus glabra*) at the car park. In fact, it landed on my head! Searching the wych elms revealed many more larvae of this species in various stages of growth. Also seen on these trees were mines and larvae of *Bucculatrix albedinella* Zell., and mines of *Stigmella marginicolella* (Stt.) and *S. ulmivora* (Fol.).

Along the border of a path through the woods plants of wood avens (*Geum urbanum*) were being mined by *S. aurella* (Fab.)/*gei* (Wocke). The taxonomic status of these moths is still, I believe, uncertain. Another interesting stigmellid, *S. aeneofasciella* (H.-S.) was found mining leaves of agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*) in a small area of chalk downland, along with *Fomoria septembrella* (Stt.) in perforate St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). In a damp area of woodland *Ectoedemia arcuatella* (H.-S.) was found in wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*). One of the few oaks (*Quercus robur*) in this complex of woods contained *E. albifasciella* (Hein.) along with *S. atricapitella* (Haw.) and *Tischeria ekebladella* (Bjerk.). *Bedellia sommlientella* (Zell.) was abundant in field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) growing along most of the borders of many woodland rides, early instar larvae of *Stephensia brunnichella* (L.) were abundant in wild basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*) while vacated feeding sites of *Parornix fagivora* (Frey) were found on several of the large beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*). Several species of phyllonoryctids were seen, the best was probably *Phyllonorycter lantanella* (Sch.). Larvae were found in leaves of the wayfaring-tree (*Viburnum lantana*), but only in plants that had been cut back to ground level during management of the chalk downland and had subsequently regrown a little. Cases of *Coleophora artemisicolella* Bru. were frequent on seeds of mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*). This species is not mapped for VC 24 in MBGBI. 3.

A total of 7 species of Macrolepidoptera and 76 micros were recorded in various stages, not bad for a relatively poor leafminer year. A full species list has been sent to our archivists and supplied to BBONT, to whom I extend my thanks for permission to hold this meeting.

Wye Valley Woodlands, Gloucestershire, 8 May 1999

Leader: **Roger Gaunt**.—This meeting was planned to do some recording in an area of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland that has scarce hook-tip *Sabra harpagula* (Esp.) and *Salebriopsis albicilla* (H.-S.) later in the season, but in which there has been no previous recording at this time of the year.

Unfortunately weather conditions were such that only a limited amount of recording took place. Gavin Boyd travelled all the way from Northampton for the morning meeting to be the only visiting member. Before heavy rain curtailed activities, Gavin recorded just one bee, *Nomada flava* (Panzer), and in addition a handful of moths of no special interest were knocked up.

In view of the conditions it did not seem likely that anyone would turn up in the evening; however Norman Binsted set out from Romsey in dry weather and having travelled all that way was undeterred by the rain, now light, that continued to fall. His MV light, stationed at Shorn Cliff, attracted 28 species of moth. By far the most common was orange footman *Eilema sorocula* (Hufn.) (Notable Nb.). Also recorded was a speciality of these woods, pauper pug *Enphithecia egenaria* (H.-S.) (RDB3).